Beedy: ACLU suing to block Utah directive

From METRO 1

have trained a spotlight on how the Department of Human Services, which oversees foster care among other things, handles children at risk and how far it should go in probing the lives of caregivers.

Such issues aren't new. A year ago, Utah's Board of Child and Family Services banned adoptions by gays, lesbians and unmarried couples. On Tuesday, the American Civil Liberties Union sued to block the rule. Arkansas has a similar policy that's also facing a legal challenge.

In El Paso County, a handful of people appeared repeatedly before the county commission in recent months to accuse the DHS of improperly taking children from their parents and at times placing them in abusive foster homes. DHS has denied the charge, creating a quandary for commissioners, who also sit as the board of directors for DHS.

About 700 children in El Paso County are in foster homes. Parents are paid from $435 to $1,550 per month, depending on medical or other needs of the child. Children can be placed for a day or for months. The average placement is six months.

DHS uses questionnaires, makes home visits and conducts background checks to identify applicants who would provide a "safe, appropriate home for a child, in the context of the child's needs," said DHS spokesman Lloyd Malone. Factors include ability to make a long-term commitment, philosophy of discipline, no history of abuse, parent's health and adequacy of the home. Potential foster parents are trained to help a child make the transition to a new environment and deal with children suffering grief, separation anxiety, abuse and trauma.

Malone said 10 to 15 percent of the county's foster parents are singles. DHS doesn't ask foster parents about their sexual orientation because "it's not something that's a function of the decision about the placement of a kid."

And, he said, any policy that would disqualify people on the basis of their marital status or sexual orientation alone would further strap a system that doesn't have enough qualified foster homes.

Beedy said her concerns arise over the need to provide troubled kids with the best chance for success while in foster care. Beedy said national statistics show "most kids that commit crimes come from one-parent families."

Colorado Springs Police Lt. Skip Arms said he knew of no data showing one-parent families produce more criminals.

It's unknown what, if any, support Beedy has among the four other commissioners. Commissioner Ed Jones, who was raised from the age of 5 by his mother, believes it's not for commissioners to say who would be a good parent.

"I'm not going to tell people they got to live under what I say," he said. "I don't think as a political arm of the state that's our job — to set policy of whether we have gays and lesbians being foster parents."

Pam Zubeck covers county government and politics and may be reached at 636-0238 or zubeck@gazette.com

Finding the spotlight

Commissioner Betty Beedy this week labeled single parents, gays and lesbians as disqualified to be foster parents. She has made several controversial remarks since taking office in January 1997:

- March 12, 1998: She opposes naming part of U.S. Highway 24 in honor of Martin Luther King Jr., saying he had extramarital affairs.
- June 4, 1998: She labels as "sluts" single moms who date around. She later qualified the remark to apply only to promiscuous women.
- July 16, 1998: Appearing on ABC's "The View," an afternoon talk show, Beedy says gay rights can't be compared to civil rights for other minorities. In trying to make her point, she notes a black co-host is obviously a minority because "she's different than the white, normal American."

thomas.loc.gov

- If reading through bills and testimony is more information than you're after, check out Project vote-smart.org, which keeps track of how officials have voted on scores of issues and also offers biographical and contact information, committee work and dozens of ratings by interest groups.

Click on "Candidates and Elected Officials," and when the page has loaded, scroll down and click on "Congress." You can then enter your ZIP code or select a state. Your representatives in Congress are Sens. Ben Nighthorse Campbell, R-Colo., Allard and Rep. Joel Hefley, R-Colo. If you have trouble finding what you are looking for, call (888) VOTE-SMART.

- Interest groups also rate legislators by their record on certain issues. Several links to such interest groups can be accessed at www.congress.org

■ The House and Senate sites give schedules, member information and roll-call votes, as well as links to members' sites. The House allows searching of all House sites; the Senate is working on this capability but offers searching for bills by number or keyword.

Members of Congress often post their voting record, issue positions or sponsored legislation on their Web sites. Self-proclaimed computer geek Allard posts floor statements, editorials and sponsored legislation; Campbell uses Thomas. Hefley has no Web site or e-mail.

www.house.gov
www.senate.gov/~allard/
www.senate.gov/~campbell/

Hot links to all the URLs in Connect are available at gazette.com *Send comments and story ideas to* connect@gazette.com, *or call* 636-0126.

The Gazette Accuracy Watch

The Gazette is committed to accuracy in its news reports. Although safeguards are in place to ensure accurate reporting, mistakes can occur. Confirmed factual errors will be corrected in this space daily. If

Broadmoor Promotions, is the same promoter sponsoring Epicure 2000, a gourmet New Year's Eve party booked at the Briarhurst Manor in Manitou Springs that also was canceled late last month because of poor ticket sales.

Fifteen people will have to make new plans to ring in 2000.

Club Retro '99 was to have featured a Blues Brothers tribute act, early '80s pop group Flock of Seagulls and '80s cover band Bristol Fashion.

The concert had sold 17 seats, but two tickets were returned when the original headliner, '80s singer Howard Jones, dropped out.

Promoters, who could not be reached for comment Friday, had publicized the show with billboards and plenty of radio spots. But locals simply did not bite at the unusual line-up.

So the city's largest indoor venue will remain empty while the rest of the world celebrates.

"There's nothing in its place at this point," World Arena general manager Dot Lischick said Friday. She said the show's pro-

she said.

Other local festivities have had slightly better luck. The Cheyenne Mountain Conference Center has sold half of the 300 couples' tickets to the Kennedy Center Imagination Celebration benefit on New Year's Eve. The $450 tickets include lodging and meals. Last year, the Imagination Celebration event was sold out by the middle of December. "We were further along than we are (now)," said Mary Mashburn, Imagination Celebration coordinator.

The Broadmoor has sold more than half of the $2,500 tickets for a three-night package, including a concert with Bernadette Peters and The Temptations.

The Colorado Springs Symphony has sold about one-third of the tickets ($35-$100) to its New Year's Eve concert at the

register at Runner's Roost and Just for Feet

2. 10 a.m.-5 p.m.: Colorado College Arts and Crafts Fair, Worner Center

3. 10 a.m.-5 p.m.: Gallery of Trees and Lights, with entertainment throughout the day, Fine Arts Center, 30 W. Dale St.

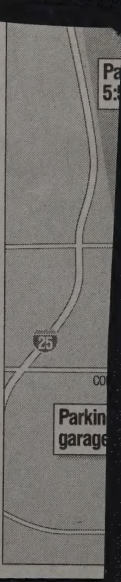
4. 10 a.m.-4 p.m.: Family Fun Day, with ornament making workshops, entertainment and more, Pioneers Museum, 215 S. Tejon St.

4-4:30 p.m.: Tuba Christmas, south side outside Pioneers Museum

5. 4:30 p.m.: Pikes Peak Hospice Trees of Life ceremony, Acacia Park

5:50 p.m.: Festival of Lights Parade

6. 8 p.m.: Soli Deo Gloria Choir concert, First Methodist Church, 420 N. Nevada Ave., free



Comment

Ralph Routon

636-0251
routon@

Gazette Telegraph / Saturday Dec. 4, 1999

Beedy takes on foster care

Commissioner: Gays, lesbians aren't qualified to be parents

By Pam Zubeck
Edited by Cliff Foster
Headline by Rhonda Van Pelt
The Gazette

El Paso County Commissioner Betty Beedy says children need a "normal biological unit."

El Paso County Commissioner Betty Beedy, whose remarks about single mothers and Martin Luther King Jr. stirred debate and controversy, is now stepping into the sensitive area of child welfare.

In an interview this week, Beedy said single parents, gays and lesbians should be disqualified as foster parents because they can't provide an "ideal" family environment, which is desperately needed by children who are removed by the courts from neglectful or abusive homes.

"I would like to help set policy (so that) when we take them out of homes, we're putting them in homes that are better than those we're taking them out of, and I'm not sure we're doing that," she said.

"It's a role model (issue). A normal biological unit of a family is a mother and father. The father and mother bring different parental skills to a family."

Beedy hasn't decided whether she'll shape her views into legislation that would be debated by the county commission. Regardless, her ideas

See Beedy METRO 2

Calendar

Want to find out how to submit
a.m. to 5 p.m. at 636-0231.

TODAY

A MUSICAL F
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McDonald St.,
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Young, 526-123

Two more suspects in rape to stand trial

The Associated Press

BOULDER — A judge in Boulder has ordered two men suspected in the kidnapping and rape of a University of Colorado student to stand trial, though defense lawyers allege the victim didn't identify their clients as her attackers.

A total of five men have been ordered to be tried for the Aug. 29 attack, in which a 20-year-old woman said she was pulled off a Boulder street, driven to two picnic areas in the foothills and repeatedly raped. A sixth suspect killed himself in September while hiding in Wisconsin.

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